



CITY OF KIRKLAND ATHLETIC FIELD USE POLICY

A. Purpose

The City of Kirkland’s Parks and Community Services Department (PCS) administers and coordinates use of athletic fields in Kirkland parks and specific Lake Washington School District (LWSD) fields.

The purpose of the Athletic Field Use Policy is to equitably balance and accommodate field use requested by organized groups and planned for City of Kirkland (City) or LWSD programs while providing necessary allowance for field care and ensuring access for informal play by the community.

The policy outlines the field allocation process and provides transparency in how field use is prioritized amongst various user groups and stakeholders.

B. Definitions

Adult – Participants age 18 and older.

Allocation – The distribution of available time between groups and programs requesting field use. The process involves evaluating field use requests and distributing field assignments fairly and impartially, per this policy.

Athletic Field Use Coordinator – The staff member within the recreation division responsible for athletic field use.

Free Play – Field use time scheduled by the City and dedicated for drop-in, informal play by the community that does not require a reservation and may not be used for organized use.

Local – An organized group is considered local when at least 65% of registered participants are Kirkland residents (if applying for use of a City field) or live within the boundaries of Lake Washington School District’s service area (if applying for use of a LWSD field). Rosters are required and will be audited.

Non-Local – An organized group is considered non-local when less than 65% of registered participants are Kirkland residents (if applying for use of a City field) or live within the boundaries of Lake Washington School District’s service area (if applying for use of a LWSD field). Rosters are required and will be audited.

Tax-exempt Nonprofit Organization (Non-Profit) – An organization that is exempted from payment of income taxes by federal or state law and has been in existence for a minimum of six months preceding the date of application.

Organized Use – Any use of an athletic field for an organized gathering, program, or event, such as those conducted by a city, school, league/organization, church, association/group, or company.

Recreational – Programs that have open registration regardless of skill level and operate with an “everyone plays” philosophy. No participants are cut from the team. The focus of the program is providing and delivering recreational opportunities.

Select – Programs that use tryouts, skill levels, and special invitation to form teams.

Sport Camp / Clinic – A program organized to provide registered youth participants with skill building instruction in one or multiple sports, typically lasting less than a week.

Youth – Participants age 17 and under or participants eligible to participate in high school sponsored sports.

C. Athletic Field Use and Availability

PCS is responsible for administering use of City of Kirkland Park athletic fields as well as select LWSD athletic fields under the Interlocal Agreement for Use between the City of Kirkland and Lake Washington School District.

A City-issued permit is required for all organized use of athletic fields managed by the City of Kirkland. Unorganized, drop-in use of an available, unprepped field by a few individuals not associated with an organized sport program is allowed without a permit.

Free Play will be scheduled at most parks, typically once per week, to ensure neighborhood access for social, drop-in, and informal play. Free Play is intended for casual, personal use of fields by the community and ensures field space is available for general public recreation. Organized use is not allowed on fields when they are reserved for Free Play.

PCS reserves the right to limit or suspend field access seasonally and during periods of inclement weather, poor playing conditions, damage, unsafe or hazardous conditions and for necessary field rest and maintenance requirements.

The Athletic Field Use Guidelines, which PCS maintains and updates regularly, exist to further define the City’s business practices surrounding field use, timelines and availability. The Guidelines contain details about the application process and requirements, the permitting process, rules and regulations and the responsibilities of field users. The Athletic Field Use Guidelines also contain the most current field inventory list, including guidance on which sports can safely be accommodated on particular fields, important dates, and the current rental rates and fees. The Athletic Field Use Guidelines document is available on the City’s website.

Field users must adhere to all park and athletic field rules and regulations in this policy, the Kirkland Municipal Code, the Athletic Field Use Guidelines, Lake Washington School District Policies, and posted on-site. Failure to follow all rules and regulations may impact leagues' ability to obtain scheduled field time.

D. Field Scheduling and Allocation

Scheduling use of athletic fields can occur in two different ways, depending on type of use.

1. Organizations seeking field space for leagues or similar use are scheduled during the allocation process.
2. Organizations or individuals seeking single-day use of an athletic field will be considered after the allocation process is complete, and are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Allocation Process for Organized Use

The athletic field allocation process is designed for organized groups seeking permitted use on an ongoing basis, typically over multiple days, months, and/or fields. Athletic field allocations happen twice annually with two seasons.

- First Season is approximately January 1 to July 31
- Second Season is approximately August 1 to December 31
- Summer camps may be allocated as part of First Season

To request permitted use, organized groups must complete a field use application. Applications for the First Season are generally due in early December. Applications for the Second Season are generally due in early May.

To be considered in the allocation process, applicants must follow all requirements outlined in the Athletic Field Use Guidelines, including submission deadlines.

The City's Athletic Field Use Coordinator will consider applications primarily based on applicant tiers, as explained below. Other considerations include:

- Safety and appropriate use of fields
- Diversity of sport, participant gender and age

Note: There are no seasonal or field use priorities in order to allow flexibility and encourage trending, developing sports. If a field can accommodate a particular sport without compromising safety or damaging a field, applications for use will be considered. The Athletic Field Use Coordinator has discretion to determine if a sport is appropriate and can safely be played on a particular field.

Late applications will be considered after the allocation process is complete, on a first-come, first-served basis.

Applicant Tiers

The applicant tiers listed below are used during the allocation process. After the allocation process is complete, new applications do not supersede others, even if they fall into a higher applicant tier.

Please note: The tiers are listed in the order they will be allocated, with the first tier first, second tier second, and so on. Within each tier, there are priorities that will be allocated in order. For example, Tier 2A is prioritized before Tier 2B and Tier 2C is prioritized before Tier 3A.

Field use applicant priority consideration is as follows:

1. First Tier
 - A. City of Kirkland and LWSD programs and events*
2. Second Tier (Local non-profit league use)
 - A. Youth Recreational
 - B. Youth Select
 - C. Adult
3. Third Tier (Non-local, non-profit league use)
 - A. Youth Recreational
 - B. Youth Select
 - C. Adult
4. Fourth Tier
 - A. Non-profit youth clinics and camps
 - B. For-profit organizations

* Per the City-School Partnership Agreement between the City of Kirkland and Lake Washington School District, LWSD-sponsored programs have priority for use of District-owned fields and athletic facilities. District programs and activities have the right to preempt other users upon giving advance notice, except in extraordinary circumstances when advance notice is not possible.

City-sponsored programs have priority for use of City-owned fields and athletic facilities. City programs and activities have the right to preempt other users upon giving advance notice, except in extraordinary circumstances when advance notice is not possible.

No person shall be denied or subjected to discrimination in receipt of the benefit of any services or activities made possible by or resulting from this policy on the basis of sex, gender identity, gender expression, race, color, religion (creed), national origin, age (except minimum age) and retirement provisions, marital status, sexual orientation, military status, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability.

While every effort will be made to schedule field use at the fields, times and dates requested, there is no guarantee all requests will be accommodated.

E. Tournament Request Period

Tournament organizers have the option to have their tournament requests considered separately from the allocation process described above. Applications for tournaments are due in early September for the following calendar year, with exact deadlines published on the City's website. Tournament applicants will be notified of their tournament application status by early December. Approved tournaments will be required to complete a tournament agreement to secure their dates.

The tournament request period is intended to allow tournament organizers to secure their dates with ample time for planning and marketing the tournament.

The City has an interest in attracting tournaments to the community. Tournaments are a unique opportunity to showcase facilities and the community and provide enhanced levels of play. As such, tournaments will be evaluated on a case by case basis with a goal to balance local play with attracting out of town visitors and economic development.

When evaluating tournaments, the City will consider a variety of elements, including but not limited to the organizer's history of producing tournaments, the economic benefit to the community, and the impact on the park system and staff.

Tournament applications not approved during the tournament request period and tournament applications submitted after the tournament request deadline have a second opportunity to be considered for scheduling. Tournament organizers may submit an application as part of the regular allocation process and will be considered according to the allocation process described above.

F. Appeals

The Athletic Field Use Coordinator will interpret and apply this Field Allocation Policy. A field user or potential field user may appeal any decision or notice of violation of this policy in writing within 10 days of the decision or notice of violation. All appeals shall be submitted to the PCS Coordinator via email and must include the basis of the appeal and requested resolution. Appeals will be reviewed by the PCS Director or their designee who will make a final decision and will notify all parties. All decisions will be made in the best interest of the community as a whole and the policies and procedures of the Department.